

THE

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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J. C. Spilman, Editor

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● Once again we are quite late in meeting our desired publication schedule. This time it was not our usual problem of finding enough spare time in our schedule to do the job, but rather a simple problem of insufficient material for publication. If it were not for our friend Bob Vlack's contributions this issue would be still waiting in the typewriter. In order that we have a few additional pages, ye editor has taken pen in hand and and jotted down a few more comments on his favorite subject of the Fugio Cents of 1787 and is presenting his thoughts on the Club Ray Fugios. All of this is leading up to the observation that we need a considerably greater participation and response, inquiries, comments, etc. etc. from our readers. The CNL has taken on an appearance in recent issues that your editor actually wants to avoid -- that of catering to lengthy papers and articles -- this is not really serving the purposes of a newsletter. In addition we need material for the Research Forum, Technical Notes, and your comments to both of these features as well as other material of general interest. We suggest that every Colonial collector has some particular item which is unusual or different from the run of the mill specimen and which he considers a special show piece. If you will send us a photograph of such items and a description, or just a description, we will be happy to run a special feature on such items.



● We are including a revised order page for back issues of The Colonial Newsletter as the last page in this issue. Three of the issues which we listed on our previous sheet as available as reprints are issues which were copyrighted personally by the previous editor of CNL, and he has requested that these issues not be made available as reprints, and of course we must follow his instructions in this matter. We regret the misunderstanding that has occurred. We have managed to obtain a few original copies of these particular issues and will make these available (serial nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7) at the prices shown as long as our supply lasts.

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❧ TECHNICAL NOTES ❧

TN-4

A NUMISMATIC PUZZLE
(Robert A. Vlack)

NOE 17

OBERVERSE & REVERSE

?



Thankfully I do not always allow a coin to puzzle me as much as this one has, and this is indeed a puzzle. This coin has been sent to Mr. Eric P. Newman who graciously had it thoroughly examined along with some adhering material within the tree branches and within the scope of his findings gave the coin the blessings of being genuine. Next, the coin has been seen by Ted Craige and by Dick Picker, both of noteworthy fame among the Colonials, and they have expressed their doubts. I have examined the coin, shot lucite slides and superimposed one upon another of the Noe 17, which it resembles all too closely, and still I cannot allow myself the satisfaction of knowing "what have I here".

Much of this coin closely resembles the Noe 17, and the general feeling is that it is a predecessor of the Noe 17 inasmuch as the stop between the DO and NEW is missing. Also, the tree is weaker and the overall lettering thinner, which indicates a strengthening of the die into the Noe 17. There is one baffling aspect though and that is the recut H, and the positioning of the undercut H. Can this be the same repeated error? The space between the bottom of the tree and the beads differ greatly between the two, as well as the space under the W. My question is this, can these be the same dies, once reworked, or, are they two different dies, can one of them be a counterfeit pair of dies, or what??? I hate to judge this a new variety until I hear from a few others, and all opinions are welcomed.

A NEW RARITY LISTING OF MASSACHUSETTS CENTS AND HALF CENTS

Robert A. Vlack and Charles M. Gore

Through experience and research we have found the Massachusetts rarity listing to be in need of revision. We offer the following listing based on an eight point scale as the new estimate of rarity. The information is an estimate of coins in collectors hands and is based on research and discussions with other collectors of Massachusetts Coppers.

Rarity	In Collectors Hands
R-8	2 or less
R-7	2-5
R-6	6-10
R-5	11-15
R-4	16-20
R-3	21-30
R-2	31-45
R-1	more than 45

1787 Mass. Cents

1-B (R-8)
 2a-F (R-6)
 2b-A (R-1)
 2b-C (R-5)
 2b-E (R-5)
 2b-G (R-8)
 3-G (R-1)
 4-C (R-4)
 4-D (R-3)
 4-J (R-8)
 5-I (R-7)
 6-G (R-2)
 7-H (R-7)
 8-G (R-8)

1788 Mass. Cents

1-D (R-1)	11-F (R-3)
2-B (R-2)	11-G (R-8)
3-A (R-3)	12-H (R-8)
3-E (R-2)	12-I (R-3)
4-G (R-3)	12-K (R-6)
4-I (R-8)	12-M (R-1)
5-H (R-8)	12-O (R-8)
6-N (R-1)	13-N (R-2)
7-M (R-4)	14-J (R-7)
8-C (R-2)	15-M (R-6)
9-M (R-5)	16-M (R-6)
10-L (R-1)	
11-C (R-3)	
11-E (R-2)	

1787 Mass. Half Cents

1-D (R-4)
 2-A (R-3)
 3-A (R-4)
 4-B (R-5)
 4-C (R-1)
 4-D (R-8)
 5-A (R-2)
 6-A (R-5)
 6-D (R-6)

1788 Mass. Half Cents

1-A (R-4)
 1-B (R-1)

THE FRENCH COLONIES SOUS of 1767

(part six)

Robert A. Vlack

This is the sixth article of a series that began in the October - December, 1961 issue of The Colonial Newsletter and has really been spread out, the fifth series being published last March of 1965. There is now an end in sight as four remaining varieties are left to be described, the 4-D, 12-L, 17-B and 18-N. Upon completion of these four, which I plan for the next article, I will follow up with the "RF" counterstamp punches, of which there are fifteen different known, and a listing of all the known varieties and combinations with punches.

Obverse 14 - In COLONIES, 1st O very slightly closed to C, 2nd O closer to L, I closer to E and about parallel with E. Last S distant from E. In FRANCOISES, A is low and leans left, OI close, 1st S slightly high and leaning right. Break develops across top of A which probably extends through N to left side of C. In L.XV, L is on a much higher plane than XV. Period high and about midway between L and arms. Small chip break below left ribbon. L leans left, XV leans left and slopes down to the left. "A" mintmark leans slightly left.

Reverse E - Previously described. (CNL, S/N 7, April-June 1962, p 10)

Obverse 15 - In COLONIES, 1st O is close to C, leans left and is slightly high. 2nd O is slightly low and closer to L. I is closer to N and S is somewhat distant from E. In FRANCOISES, "FR" close with F leaning slightly left. A is slightly high, O closer to C. E is high, closer to 1st S and leans left. In L.XV, L leans slightly left, the period is high and closer to the arms. X is lower than V. Left leg of A mintmark is lower than right leg. A chip break develops between N and C of FRANCOISES.

Reverse I - Previously described. (CNL, S/N 10, December 1963, p 10)

Obverse 16 - In COLONIES, 1st O slightly closer to L, I closer to N and about parallel with N. COL widely spaced and about on a straight line. Break connects top of S to center. In FRANCOISES, F is low and leans left, N leans left, SE high. Base of E higher than S's. "A" mintmark well centered with accent over left side of A. In L.XV, L leans slightly left, period slightly closer to arms. XV well spaced with right upright of V lower than left upright.

Reverse F - Previously described. (CNL, S/N 7, April-June 1962, p 10)

THE FRENCH COLONIES SOUS of 1767



14-E



15-I



16-F



COMMENTS ON THE FUGIO CENTS of 1787

THE CLUB RAY FUGIOS

One of several mysteries associated with the Fugio Cents of 1787 is the Club Ray varieties. It is generally believed that these coins are from dies reworked for no special reason, perhaps simply a whim of the die sinker to emphasize the ray structure for aesthetic purposes.

My examinations of the Club Ray varieties have lead me to the conclusion that the existance of the Club Rays entails considerably more than simple die rework. I have decided that the heavy club rays were a matter of necessity and the result of a specific event in the Fugio history. I believe that the face of the master hub suffered serious damage - almost catastrophic - and that the dies and coinage made after this event were produced under significantly different circumstances than the Fine Ray coinage.

To begin with, the heavy Club Rays are not just cut over the existing fine ray structure. The basic ray structure is simply not on portions of these dies. Both the heavy Club Rays and the finer intermediate rays are recut, and these finer rays are of a different shape and position than the original rays. On some well struck specimens a vestige of the ray tips and some limited portions of the original ray structure can be seen.

The damage to the hub might have been caused by dropping, but I believe it more likely that it was the result of a material failure causing a sloughing off of raised portions of the hub. Another possibility is rust. This damage extended almost completely throughout the sun and left ray structure and down into approximately the upper quarter of the dialplate structure. The only features that escaped serious damage in this area were the gnomon of the dialplate and the right ray structure. Accordingly, dies sunk from this damaged hub required extensive hand cutting on the individual dies in order to reconstruct the basic design. This ranged from the usual rework on the rays and sun face plus the reconstruction of the upper portions of the dial plate to the complete recutting of the entire dialplate of Obverse #5 including several extra flourishes added to the supporting structure. As designated above, and relative to the coins, left is the Fugio side, right is the date side.

I have also concluded that the die sinker who produced the dies for the Club Ray Fugios was a different person than he who produced the dies for the Fine Ray varieties. The overall workmanship on the Club Rays is noticeable inferior to the workmanship of the Fine Ray dies. In addition there are a number of significant differences

which I believe lend support to this conclusion. These are:

- (1) The ornamental punches between the dialplate numerals, originally applied to cover the extraneous fifth bar in the numeral IIII, were not used on the dialplates of the Club Rays. This hub error is clearly seen on these varieties except for Obverse #5 where the entire dialplate has been recut and the error has been entirely removed. I am suggesting here that this diesinker (a) did not know of the hub error, or did not care about it, and (b) the puncheon used for this ornamentation was no longer available.
- (2) The regular G puncheon used in FUGIO on the Fine Ray varieties was not available for use on the Club Rays. In all cases a C punch was used and on all but two varieties, Obverses #2 and #23, was hand cut into a G. Apparently this was overlooked on these and resulted in the two FUCIO varieties. In addition, different 7 punches were used for the date. Here again I believe is evidence of careless workmanship and perhaps loss of some of the puncheons.
- (3) With one exception, there is no interchange within the Club Ray family of obverse and reverse dies. This one exception is the recently discovered new reverse, designated HH, found in combination with Obverse #5. This suggests to me an entirely different method of operation in coinage of the Club Rays as compared with the Fine Rays where extensive interchange occurred.
- (4) There are very few clicking marks resulting from clashed dies in the Club Ray family. Some are occasionally found on 3-D. Here again is a suggestion of a different method of operation in the coinage process.

Another of the more interesting aspects of the Club Ray Fugios is that a different background pattern is used for the interior of the dialplate for each die variety, whereas the Fine Ray Fugios all have a reticulated or "pebble" surface. The hub damage may have created problems in this area which were a bit beyond the abilities of the die sinker. The numerals on the upper portion of the dialplate could not be readily restored to the die so the diesinker contented himself with recutting the outer and inner edges of the upper dial plate plus some minor attempts to reconstruct the numerals.

The dialplate interior patterns are a puzzle for which I have reached no positive conclusions, although I suspect that a chip may have dropped out of the hub in the area between the gnomon and the numeral VIII, resulting in a raised area on the dies. Tooling marks remaining after removal may have been objectionable and could have been hidden by the background pattern.

If this was the reason for these background patterns, the hub damage that resulted in this action occurred later in time than the initial damage because the most recently discovered Club Ray Fugio, variety 23-ZZ, has the "pebble" dialplate of the Fine Ray Fugios.

I have tabulated below the interesting features associated with the rework on each of the Club Ray Fugio obverses, and a few comments relative to other peculiarities of each of these dies. The variety designations used are those established by Mr. Eric P. Newman for the Fugio series.

● Obverse #2

Concave end Club Rays, considerable vestigial ray structure on right side, tips of original structure, only, on left. C in FUCIO not recut to G.

Sun very weak, not reworked.

Inner and outer dialplate outline reconstructed at top. Numerals essentially blank between VI of VIII and XI.

Point and entire upper edge of gnomon reconstructed.

Extra flourishes added each side of dialplate support.

Horizontal line added below sundial base.

Dialplate background pattern - series of dots made by puncheon having a 3 X 5 matrix pattern on approximately 0.2mm centers. Dot pattern spills over onto VII on die and can be seen within incuse numerals in several places.

Center dot in dial plate ornamentation.

● Obverse #3

Round end Club Rays - some vestigial ray structure to right.

Sun strengthened by punch marks for eyes, nose, and mouth; mouth off center to right.

Inner and outer dial plate outline reconstructed from III in VIII to X in XI. Numerals essentially blank within this area.

Point of gnomon sharpened and lengthened.

Dial plate background is essentially blank except in area between gnomon and VII which has regular "pebble" pattern.

No center dot in dial plate ornamentation.

● Obverse #4

Round end Club Rays - traces of original ray structure at right.

Sun strengthened by adding punch marks for eyes, nose, and mouth; mouth off center to left.

Inner and outer dial plate outline reconstructed from above V in VIII to above X in XI. Numerals blank within this area.

Dial plate background essentially blank except for "pebble" pattern at extreme outer edges next to numeral band.

No center dot in dialplate ornamentation.

● Obverse #5

Concave end Club Rays

Sun normal to somewhat weak, possibly minor rework.

Entire dialplate numeral band recut, hub error no longer shows on IIII, attempt to restore IX resulted in IV, tip of gnomon lengthened and broadened.

Dialplate background is series of diagonal and horizontal lines forming various parallelogram patterns.

Extra flourishes added to each side of dialplate support, more extensive than on obverse #2. Horizontal line added below sundial base, considerably heavier than on Obverse #2. Very heavy cyclical line added in area between dial support and dialplate.

Center dot in dialplate ornamentation.

● Obverse #23

Concave end Club Rays. C in FUCIO not recut to G. Considerable vestigial ray structure of both right and left. One and possibly two of the Club Rays have round ends rather than concave.

Dialplate background pattern is normal "pebble" surface as found on Fine Ray varieties. Very little damage in numeral band.

Center dot in dialplate ornamentation.

I am of the opinion that Obverse #23 represents the transitional sinking between the Fine Ray varieties and the Club Ray varieties, and was perhaps the first attempt at reconstruction, followed by obverses 2, 5, and 3 or 4 in that order. In addition the workmanship is very similar on 23, 2 and 5, and may be the work of one die sinker, different from he who produced the dies for 3 and 4 from which issued the majority of the Club Ray coinage.

In this group of comments and in earlier comments on the Fugio Cents, I have stated that I believed that only a single master hub existed for the Fugios. It has been suggested to me that the Fugio dies were not sunk from a single hub, but could have been sunk from working hubs raised from an intaglio. This, of course, is quite possible; however, if an intaglio had been used - or had been available - there would have been no reason for the existence of the Club Ray dies, as the damaged hub could have been discarded and a new one, raised from the intaglio, used in its place. A second point for this argument is that an intaglio could have been rather easily recut by hand to correct the IIII error thereby saving the considerable effort required to punch all the ornaments between the numerals on the many Fine Ray dies. I consider these two points very substantial evidence that there was only one master hub made for the Fugio obverses, and that intaglios and working hubs were not used.

In conclusion, I am proposing the concept that the Club Ray Fugios are the direct result of severe damage to the Fugio master hub, and that the Club Ray dies and coinage were produced under radically different circumstances (including mint location, personnel, material sources for planchets, etc.) than the Fine Ray Fugios. I have intentionally omitted from these comments a discussion of the reverses which occur in combination with the Club Ray obverses. I am not yet ready to go into this aspect of the Club Ray concept; however, I would like to make the observation that my studies - so far - of these reverses suggest that there are several of the Fine Ray Fugios which may actually be members of the Club Ray "family".

Finally, I want to emphasize that these comments are based entirely on direct visual examination of the known Club Ray varieties and that my conclusions should be considered preliminary and subject to revision. As time passes and new varieties and better specimens are discovered, and as different techniques are utilized, it may be necessary to revise these ideas. At present; however, these are my thoughts on the subject. Comments and criticism regarding these concepts will be welcomed.

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